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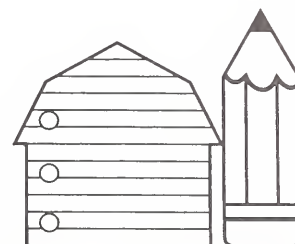
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# Ag in the Classroom

# Notes

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## New Teaching Kit Puts Together The Pieces Of The Fiber System

Ask kids where their T-shirt came from, and they're likely to answer, "The mall." Even those who know that their shirt is made from cotton are unlikely to know how this agricultural product moved from the farmer's field to their dresser drawer.

A new set of materials, "It's a Puzzlement," should help clear up some of the confusion. Developed by the National Farm-City Council, this interdisciplinary unit is designed for teachers in grades K-6 who use a thematic approach to teaching.

The materials show how the products from cotton, sheep, and cattle are manufactured into the products students use every day. They include sample lessons that incorporate teaching about the fiber system into social studies, language arts, math, science, and fine arts.

For example, children in the primary grades become "Fabric Detectives." With the help of characters Terry Cloth, Iva Sole, and Ann Gora, they learn about how some of the products they use every day made their journey from the farm to the city.

Older students discuss how technology has helped farmers and ranchers. They research topics including the importance of wool in Revolutionary times and the use of nylon during World War II.

For a science activity, students make natural dyes from onions, blueberries, and marigolds. They experiment to see how different fabrics



Inspector Terry Cloth

Detective Ann Gora



Investigator Iva Sole

*Terry Cloth, Iva Sole, and Ann Gora are characters who help students become "Fabric Detectives" in the National Farm-City Council's new teaching kit, "It's a Puzzlement."*

absorb color. The kit also includes suggestions for follow-up activities and a bibliography of children's books for those who want to explore the topic in more depth.

"It's a Puzzlement," with its emphasis on the important links between rural and urban areas, is ideal for use during Farm-City Week, Ag Week, and other agriculture-related celebrations. Kits are \$5.00, which includes postage. Write the National Farm-City Council, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

## Book Corner: *My Mom's A Vet* Appeals To Children Who Love Animals



Given the popularity of James Herriot's books, there are obviously a lot of people who have wondered what it would be like to be a veterinarian. A new book by Henry Horenstein, *My Mom's a Vet*, gives children an inside look at this career.

Twelve-year-old Darcie has agreed to help her mother, a country veterinarian, for the summer. In exchange, she'll be able to attend gymnastics camp. In down-to-earth language, Darcie explains what her mom does as she takes care of sick goats and pigs, lame horses, and calving cows.

Darcie learns that a veterinarian's work is hard, messy, and fascinating--and that her mother does it well. Darcie alternates between enthusiasm and squeamishness as she helps her mother x-raying and wrapping a horse's leg, assisting with calving, dehorning a baby goat, operating on a dairy cow with a twisted stomach, and caring for other sick animals.

As Darcie learns about her mother's career, she also learns about the realities of farm life. In one passage, she observes: "While we waited, Mom and I made out the bill and gave it to the Halperins. They gave her a

check on the spot, which Mom really appreciated. Most farmers aren't paid very much for their milk and animals. They have many more expenses than most businesses. Sometimes they have to wait a month or two to pay their bills. This can make it hard for Mom to pay her bills."

The real-life stars of the book are Darcie Haggis and her mother Alice Ennis, D.V.M. The full-color photography is both striking and realistic as it shows children unsentimental information about veterinary procedures and the biology and behavior of animals.

Children who are considering a career as a veterinarian--or those who just love animals--will enjoy the book. It would make an ideal addition to a classroom unit on agriculture-related careers. The 64-page, full-color book is recommended for children 8 - 12 years of age.

*My Mom's a Vet* was published by Candlewick Press in May of 1994. Copies are \$17.95. For more information, contact Candlewick Press at 2067 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140. (617) 661-0565.

*My Mom's a Vet*, a new book for 8- to 12-year-olds, gives children a first-hand view of the life of a large-animal veterinarian.



## Ohio Farm Women Recognize Outstanding Children's Books

For years, the Caldecott and Newberry awards have recognized outstanding children's literature. Now a new award, sponsored by the Ohio Farm Bureau Women, honors children's books that depict agriculture accurately.

"It seems that in almost every grade level today, students are encouraged to write," says Shirley Boyd of the Ohio Farm Bureau. "Teachers are looking for books that touch on all curriculum areas. The award is designed to help teachers identify excellent children's literature that presents the subject of agriculture accurately and appropriately."

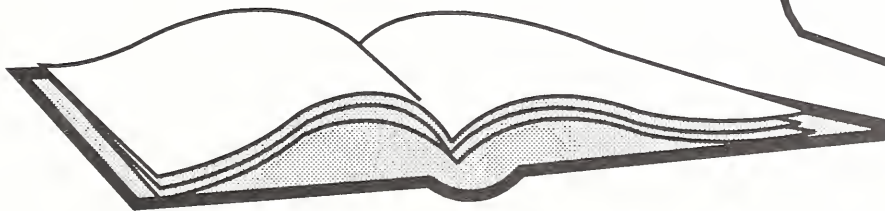
Criteria for the Ohio Farm Bureau Women's Award for Children's Literature include: interpretation of an agricultural theme; presentation and accuracy; clarity; development of plot; development of characters; setting; appropriateness of style. This year, the winning author was Nancy Price Graff for *The Strength of the Hills: A Portrait of a Family Farm*.

Graff traveled to Ohio to receive the award ... and visited elementary schools to share her work with the children while she was there. Outreach to schools is an important part of the awards program, Boyd says. "One of the most exciting things that's happened to us is that teachers are now sharing books they find with us."

In accepting the award, Graff noted that she was inspired to write it when her son could not find books about farms in their part of Vermont. She and photographer Richard Howard spent a week with a farm family.

As news of the award spreads, publishers make sure the organization knows about their new publications. "Now they send books directly to the Farm Bureau women's office," Boyd says.

Although there are many programs honoring children's books, the Ohio award is unique. "Previous winners have told us how significant it is to receive an award from an agricultural organization," Boyd says.



## Activity Book Helps Young Children Have "Fun With The Plant Nutrition Team"



*Children in the primary grades will have fun learning more about plant nutrients with a new activity book developed by the Potash & Phosphate Institute.*

Primary grade children ask lots of questions: how do plants grow? What's in dirt? What happens to plants if they do not have water or sunlight?

A new activity book helps teachers answer some of those questions. Developed by the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) and the Foundation for Agronomic Research (FAR) for students in kindergarten through third grade, the teaching kit presents information about the importance of plant nutrients and basic concepts of food and fiber production.

"Fun With the Plant Nutrient Team" is a 24-page booklet introducing young children to nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, the major plant nutrients. They appear as cartoon characters in a variety of activities designed especially for primary grades: dot-to-dot, word puzzles, coloring activities, mazes, matching pictures, and experiments. The activities also present basic scientific principles, including soil conservation and the importance of modern science to today's farmers.

The teacher's guide helps teachers incorporate the activity book into a variety of hands-on lessons. The guide also includes scientific data that helps teachers understand the background of the information presented in the activity book.

Details called D.I.R.T.S. -- Definitions, Information, Reasons, Tidbits, and Suggestions--offer teachers background information that enriches their own understanding of the subject. "The research for the activity book produced so many wonderful miscellaneous details it seemed a shame not to include them for teachers," says David Dibb, president of PPI.

Copies of the student activity book are \$1.00 each, plus shipping and handling. For more information, contact PPI, Circulation Manager, 655 Engineering Drive, Suite 110, Norcross, GA 30092-2821. (404) 447-0335



## Mum's The Word For Thematic Teaching Materials

Because elementary school children are growing so rapidly themselves, they are often fascinated to watch other growing things. Many teachers have found that plants make excellent teaching tools. A new teaching package for elementary schools, The Magnificent Mum Education Program, was designed to promote plant-oriented, hands-on, theme-based science teaching.

Kits are available for grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. All encourage thematic teaching, and all help teachers incorporate lessons with a mum theme into science, math, reading, social studies, language arts, art, environmental studies, and fitness.

The Teacher's Guide includes suggestions for hands-on experiments, plant growing projects, spring and fall mum festivals, and beautification activities for the school and the community. The accompanying kit includes a garden mum poster, a history of chrysanthemums, 60 stickers featuring cartoon characters known as the Mum Kids, a resource list of books and magazines, and 50 push-on tags containing growing tips and a photo. Also included is ordering information for a free Classroom Chrysanthemum Cutting Kit providing enough plant cuttings to grow 50 plants.

The chrysanthemum gets its name from the Greek word *khrusanthemon*, which means "golden flower." Today, however, this showy flower can be found in almost every color except blue. In Japan, annual chrysanthemum festivals rival the scale of Oktoberfest in Germany and other harvest festivals throughout the world.

The program was written by garden education experts, but has been reviewed and approved by classroom teachers across the country. Copies of the book are \$9.95, plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. Contact Customer Service, Yoder Brothers Inc., PO Box 230, Barberton, OH 44203. (800) 321-9573.



MOE



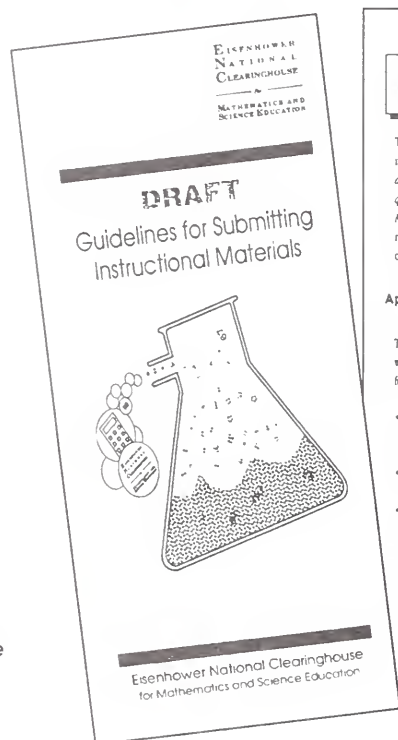
MILLIE



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*Cartoon characters introduce elementary school children to gardening and to the chrysanthemum in The Magnificent Mum Education Program.*

## On-Line Link Helps Teachers Share Math, Science Teaching Tools



### GUIDELINES FOR CONSIDERING MATERIALS

To be selected for the Clearinghouse database, an item must meet criteria in each of four areas: *appropriateness of materials*, *types of materials*, *quality of materials*, and *availability of materials*. All items must also be of a technical quality when received by the Clearinghouse to be usable in a classroom.

#### Appropriateness of Materials

The Clearinghouse uses the following general criteria when considering the appropriateness of an item for the database:

- Is the subject matter within the domains of mathematics or the natural sciences—pure or applied?
- Is the item useful in supporting instruction in grades K-12?
- Is the item in one or more of the following categories: instructional plans, support materials, instructional aids or media, kits, equipment, professional development materials for teachers, or background information suitable for classroom use?

#### Types of Materials

The Clearinghouse is particularly interested in acquiring instructional materials, including instructional plans and supporting materials. The term *instructional plans* is used broadly to include all comprehensive plans for activities, lessons, sets of lessons, instructional units, or courses that would enable a teacher to implement or modify instruction to meet specific classroom needs. *Supporting materials* include print or non-print items or multimedia formats that are directly usable with students for instructional purposes.

The Clearinghouse is not generally considering brief items (such as unsupported worksheets or isolated lesson plans), advertising and promotional materials, catalogs, flyers, news releases, or newsletters that do not contain instructional materials.

The Clearinghouse is looking for materials with various format types, including print materials (curriculum documents, activity guides, teacher and student guides, etc.), computer-based materials (software, images, CD-ROMs, optical disks, laser discs, computer assisted instruction, etc.), audiovisual materials (videotapes, audiotapes, films, slides, overhead transparencies, microfiche, etc.), multimedia programs/packages, kits (including kit plans), manipulatives, and instructional aids (games and simulations, posters, maps, charts, etc.).

#### Quality of Materials

The Clearinghouse takes a holistic approach to evaluating the overall quality of material. To be selected, an item must exhibit a sufficient array of features from the categories below:

- Organization (ease of use, presence of content organizers, etc.)
- Educational Objectives (instructional goals, educational outcomes, etc.)
- Content (accurate, valid, target audience, up-to-date, etc.)
- Teaching Strategies (target group, methodology, teaching/learning modes, etc.)
- Activities (logical relationships, relevance, suitability and safety, etc.)

#### Availability of Materials

The Clearinghouse uses the following general criteria when considering the availability of an item for the database:

- Is the item readily available to educators from the Clearinghouse, from commercial vendors, from a professional organization, or from some other commonly recognized source?
- Are details pertaining to availability of the item known? (These details are requested at the time of submission.)
- If an item does not meet the preceding criteria, is it endangered or of historic value?

Teachers can take advantage of the best math/science materials developed by educators across the nation through the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education

Have you ever wished that you could share your innovative ideas with teachers throughout the nation? Have you ever wanted the opportunity to ask other teachers how they teach a particular mathematics or science concept? Have you ever needed materials for a math or science lesson and been unable to find something useful? Have you ever wondered where to begin to look for these materials?

Teachers who answered "yes" to even one of these questions will want to support and receive assistance from the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education (ENC). Located at Ohio State University, ENC is designed to improve access to math and science resources available to teachers, students, and parents. The Clearinghouse will collect and create the most up-to-date and comprehensive listing of mathematics and science curriculum materials in the nation. The list of resources will then be made available in a database in a variety of formats, including print, CD-ROM, and electronically on-line.

Those with a computer, a modem, and access to the Internet will have free online access to many of the materials collected by the Clearinghouse. For those without electronic access, materials will be available for a nominal charge through the ENC document delivery service. Current plans are for the on-line portion

of the clearinghouse to be available to teachers in November or December 1995.

ENC is now soliciting instructional materials for inclusion in the database. In general, the Clearinghouse uses the following general criteria when considering the appropriateness of an item for the database:

- Is the subject matter within the domains of mathematics or the natural sciences—pure or applied?
- Is the item useful in supporting instruction in grades K-12?
- Is the item in one or more of the following categories: instructional plans, support materials, instructional aids or media, kits, equipment, professional development materials for teachers, or background information suitable for classroom use?
- For more information about ENC, or to request a materials submission form, contact the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education, The Ohio State University, 1929 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1079. (614) 292-7784. The E-mail address is [info@enc.org](mailto:info@enc.org)



The Farm Bureau has developed another set of articles and plans to continue the program for this school year. Partners for the program



Many newspapers sponsor NIE programs. Senobe concludes, "A program like this is an excellent way to get agriculture's story into the classroom."

## Ag in the Classroom---State Contacts

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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## Ag in the Classroom Notes

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